

The Mourning Poets:
OR, AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
POEMS
ON THE
DEATH
OF THE
QUEEN.

In a Letter to a Friend.

Singula quæq; locum teneant sortita decenter.

*Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi——male si mandata loqueris
Aut dormitabo aut ridebo. Horat. de Art. Poet.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for J. Whitlock, near Stationers-Hall, 1695.

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Printed for J. Whitlock, near Stationers Hall, 1825

THE Mourning Poets, &c.

In a Letter to a Friend.

WHat! Would You see those Poems on the Queen,
Which few, besides the Printers, e're have seen?
I sent you some which were esteem'd the best,
Must you, my Friend, desire th' unworthy rest?
I'll bate you Hundreds that infest the Town,
And only send one bad one of my own:
But as the last still borrows from the first,
'Tis wholly owing to the best and worst;
Each, with a different Fate, exacts my Lays,
Some to commend, and others to dispraise:
This be my Task, let abler Pens aspire
To sing a Queen, I only can admire;
My Virgin Muse must modestly decline
Th' unequal Task, and starts at the Design:
Maria is a Theme, She must forbear,
Her tender Pinions still unfledg'd appear,
And cannot soar to so sublime a Sphere.

Her Friends, I mean those who her Right assert,
(For who were Foes to such a high Desert?)

In distant Regions, but in *Albion* most

Express their Grief, and mourn *Maria* lost :

Nor does She fall ^{unmourn'd not} ~~unmourn'd~~ ev'n by those

Whom the malicious World miscals her Foes.

Ev'n *Dryden* mourns; tho yet he does refuse

To mourn in public, and exert his Muse ;

Nor can we well his Want of Love suspect,

Who kindly could an absent Muse correct.

In *Congreve* *Dryden's* ours, to Him we owe

The tuneful Notes which from *Alexis* flow :

He chose out *Congreve*, and inspir'd his Flame ;

Congreve, his best belov'd, and next in Fame ;

Whose Beams the unexpected World surprise,

As when unseen the Sun in Clouds does rise,

Then breaking through, at once attracts our Eyes,

Unlike in this, no Night succeeds his Day,

But still he shines with one continued Ray.

When in full Glory *Congreve* first appear'd,

We saw, we wonder'd, and confest the Bard ;

Dryden by Thee All own these Wonders done,

Thou taught'st this Eagle to approach the Sun.

He to the Swains *Pastora's* Fate bemoans,

Sighs to the Winds, and fills the Vales with Groans.

The Vales return his Groans, the Winds his Sighs ;

And ev'ry Swain repeats the tuneful Cry.

Not so lamented *Græcian Bion* fell,
 Nor *Venus* mourn'd the lovely Boy so well ;
 Poets unborn shall make his Lays their Theme,
 And future *Rapins* take their Rules from him.

Here let me end his Praise, but whom, my Muse,
 Will't thou place next? place boldly next *Motteux* ; 2
 Whose charming numbers can at once dispence
 The *Gallic* softness, and the *Brittish* sense :
 He with his Labours does oblige our Isle,
 Adorns our Language, and refines our Stile,
 Shows how to write, by what himself has writ,
 And shames us *Britons*, to a sense of Wit.
Horace himself, inspir'd by him, prepares
 To lull our Griefs, and stop our boundless Tears :
 Scarce *Horace* sung in so divine a strain,
 Scarce could he with such Harmony complain ;
 The flowing numbers charm my Mind to Peace,
 Enchant my Woes, and make ev'n Sorrow please.

Maria's Death does *Stepney's* Muse revive, 3
 And by his Muse, *Maria* seems alive.
 He, while his long neglected Flame returns,
 Like *Waller* praises, and like *Waller* mourns,
 His fainting Muse uplifts her drooping Head,
 And sweetly sings, when we bemoan'd her Dead :

So in Distress *Arion*, doubly warm'd,
 With Numbers thought his last, divinely charm'd.
 Once, when his Hero's Voyage did employ
 His artful Muse, his Verses flow'd with Joy;
 He taught the *Tritons* on their Shells to play,
 And prais'd, and blest *Maria's* gentle Sway.
 But now, like us, by Fate's Decree distress'd,
 He mourns the Beauty, whom before he blest.

4 Majestic *Dennis* next demands my Lays;
 Soar, Muse, and strive thy feeble Flight to raise, }
 In Numbers, like his own, attempt his Praise. }
 Like *Pindar*, he, unutterably bold,
 Burns like a raging Fire, and cannot be controul'd.
 Gods! With what State his daring Thoughts arise, }
 While with sonorous Wings he upwards flies, }
 Till he seems lost above his darling Skies!
 Some wondrous active Force informs the whole,
 Each Word has Life, and ev'ry Line a Soul.
 Bold Pictures thus the help of Shades disclaim,
 There all is Light, all Heat, all dazzles, all is Flame.
 How shall I show his vast commanding Force!
 His rapid Transports, and unequal'd Course!
 His towering Muse which scorns a human Flight!
 But shines aloft, and blinds with too excessive Light!
 With him my Soul thro' rapt'rous Regions flies,
 And drinks at once a rowling Stream of Joys;

Convulsive Transports all my Vitals tear :

Gods ! 'tis too much, too much for Man to bear.

Dennis, thy Words alone thy Thoughts can right,

As Fire is best discover'd by its Light.

I cease, for tho my Blood with Fury boil.

To mock the Thunder is a dang'rous Toil.

Descend, my Muse, resume thy humble Strain,

Nor court a Pleasure that's ally'd to Pain ;

Let now the slow, tho zealous Bard be prais'd,

*Who to his Muse a *Mausoleum* rais'd :*

Maria's Worth, and Royal Bounty prov'd

*The Muse, that best the *Lawrell'd Poet* mov'd.*

See ! The whole Man now labours to deplore,

Now strains, and strives above himself to soar.

What mighty care he takes t' improve a Thought !

A Slave to Sense, and cautious to a Fault.

*All modest Beauties thus, like prudent *Tate*,*

False glittering Gems, and gawdy Tinsel hate.

Ere Elegy to noisy Rant was turn'd,

*This was observ'd when *Rome* and others mourn'd.*

*In *Cowley's* strain mourns *Westley's* grateful Muse,*

Nor could she well the doleful Task refuse :

*He shares a part of th' *English Pindar's* Flame ;*

The same their Beauties, and their Faults the same.

More gladly we his *Life of Christ* had seen,
Were his God prais'd as well as is his Queen.

Yet tho his Vein does by degrees refine,
Speaks him a Poet, and his Fancies shine,

Down, down, down, down, is what he should decline.

*Walsh's Oe.
p. 9.*

Walsh with an artless Grief our loss displays,
Smooth are his Words, and modest is his Praise,
Grave are his Thoughts, his Muse to Vice a Foe.
Who could expect a Sermon from a Beau?

Gould's untaught Muse on this betrays a Wit
For Satire more than Panegyric fit;
Tho in the Piece no Satire should be seen
It shocks us less than his, *God save the Queen.*

Talbot instructs the Painter how to show,
With moving Art, this dismal Pomp of Woe.
Oh! Painter, canst thou draw what he can sing,
A dying Queen, and a lamenting King?

Betimes our learn'd *Academies* reveal,
The Products of their ever forward Zeal;
In some, old *Roman* Beauties we descry,
With *Virgil* these, and those with *Horace* vye.
Almost the same their Purity and Grace,
But not in all these mighty Charms we trace;

All praise *Maria*, but not All with Flame,
 And All to like's as bad as All to blame.
 Here some in Epigrams their Sorrows vent,
 In *Syriac*, *Turkish*, nay in *Welsh* lament;
 There while like *Rome* Some would their Thoughts express,
 A Modern Air prophane's their Ancient Drefs:
 Yet 'tis less Guilt to venture on this Crime,
 Than to commit odd *Latin-English* Rhyme:
 For sure the Dunce can be excus'd by none,
 Who dead Tongues studies, and unlearns his own:
 Such more for Pedants than for Poets pass,
 As your meer Scholar is a learned Ass:
 Let these usurp the Tongues of ev'ry Land,
 Which They, and none but They half-understand,
 Their idle Toyl, and Failures well excuse,
 So they in *English* ne'er debauch a Muse.
 Yet all in Colleges not thus are curst,
 Some in our Tongue stand equal with the First:
 These like Exceptions are to general Rules,
 Free from th' Infection of contagious Schools;
 And had deserv'd with Honour to be nam'd,
 But most were silent, tho their Lays were claim'd.

Some *Noble Pens* gave Verse, but not their Name,
 Worthy at once, and negligent of Fame:
 These, with some few that scap'd me in the throng,
 Miss here the Dues which to their Lays belong.

Some on this Theme not without Art have writ,
 With here and there a glimmering Spark of Wit,
 But stuff the rest with old, flat, trivial Thoughts,
 And scare the Beauties countervail the Faults.

Others, whose End and Dulness is the same,
 In couples hunt that common Mistress Fame;
 A want of Sense, and scarcity of Lines,
 (Like Pedlars low in Stock) the Poetasters joyns.

I'll flight a Wretch, who, to exalt his Theme,
 Did blest *Maria*, and her God blaspheme,
 And to adorn his Queen, his Godhead rob;
 Since *J. D. Gent.* proves only Blue-coat C—

Few Rhymers think Mediocrity their Lot;
 So most will think they're wrong'd because forgot,
 Tho I forget 'em, but to wrong 'em not.
 All should their Tears, but not their Verses bring,
 For all can grieve, but very few can sing.
 Rhym'd Panegyrics These in vain compose,
 If they must praise, why don't They praise in Prose?
 Besides, we're glutted, no distinction's had,
 And the Good lye confounded with the Bad:
 For who can read, tho he delights to toy,
 All the good Paper which our Scribblers spoyl?

Yet to move Sadness let *their Works* be had,
 And sure they'll prove, unless the Reader's mad,
 Grave, woful, dismal, lamentably sad.
 What bulky Heaps of doleful Rhyme I see !
 Sure all the World runs mad with Elegy ;
 Lords, Ladies, Knights, Priests, Souldiers, Squires, Physicians,
 Beaux, Lawyers, Merchants, Prentices, Musicians,
 Play'rs, Footmen, Pedants, Scribes of all Conditions.
 We most of These the Rhyming Mob may call,
 With Fustian Sheets encombring ev'ry Stall ;
 Wights by their ill, or their no Genius curst
 To copy still, and copy for the worst :
 To Paper fatal, the lethargic Elves
 At their own Cost in Print lampoon themselves ;
 Proud of whole Sheets of tedious Nothings full,
 And like Themselves emphatically dull.

Yet with pedantic, dark, *prosaic* Rhymes,
 Or Bombast which irregularly chimes,
 These would be thought the *Pindars* of the Times :
 Then may some Rill, aspiring to be great,
 With pigmy Waters mate a Mountain's height,
 Pretend to roar, and scare the fearful Swains,
 Orewhelm its Banks, and foam and roul impetuous o're
 [the Plains.

But

But who's the Chief of this presumptuous Band?
 Place D---y first, and let him All command;
 D---y not ev'n by this great Theme was fir'd,
But found himself alas not now inspir'd
With any Genius for Poetry,
Such as They on these occasions us'd to be.
 He, while his subject strongly prompts to weep,
 Can cause, with Feet that hobble, strut, or creep,
 Mirth, and then Pity, Anger, Scorn and Sleep.
 He gives us Lines to fool our Sorrow fit,
 The merriest *Funeral Ode* that ere was writ;
 Yet false the Mirth, and treacherous the Relief,
 He racks a sacrilegious Laugh from Grief:
 But like tart Draughts with nauseous After-tasts,
 The Pleasure passes, and the Loathing lasts.
 Yet blame him not, He, to ill Stars a Slave,
 When Grief should rule is Gay, when Mirth is Grave;
 Still to run counter is the *Farcians* Rule,
 Thus He turn'd *Quixot* out of Ridicule.

Then, *Ye poor Snarlers of the Age*, be gone,
 'Tis scandalous to kick a Man that's down;
 The Wretch is fall'n to such a low Degree,
 He claims Compassion, and from Satire's free.

'Tis time t'have done, thank Heav'n, my Paper's full,
 Since ev'n the Thoughts of D---y make me Dull.

F I N I S.

